

Andrew Jackson to John Brown, October 8, 1819, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO COLONEL JOHN BROWN.

Hermitage, October 8, 1819.

D'r Sir: Yours of the 25th ult. is Just received and that you may correct the Egregious Error which you have fallen into I hasten to reply. I well recollect on my return from the city last spring the conversation that Took place between you and myself relative to the conduct of Colo. John William towards me, during the last session of congress, and I also recollect your wishes as well as desire expressed of bringing about a reconciliation between us—to which I as well recollect I replied that his late as well as former conduct towards me required explanation and reparation his late attempt in the Senate to injure me, by secretly disseminating the basest falshoods, (that I had reserved the Salt Spring in the late chickesaw purchase for myself, and had leased it before the Ink was dry upon the treaty etc etc—and that I was engaged in large speculations in Pensacola) etc etc which he intended as a vital stab to my reputation. Notwithstanding at my age I had a wish to be in friendship with all the world, I never could be friendly with Colo. Williams untill a full explanation and compleat satisfaction for the injury he had attempted to do me during the last session of congress was made.

I cannot foresee from the conversation that passed between us how you have fell into the Error you have done and which you have expressed when you say in your letter that my reply was that you might say to Colo. Williams I had no wish to remain unfriendly with him—unless you mean to convay the Idea, that I was anxiously waiting, a fit opportunity to have the necessary explanation with him, and thereby put an end to the difference

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that existed between us. If this is your meaning, you might have inferred it from our conversation, but that I did, or ever intended to say to you that I was willing to become friends with Colo. Williams without his first making a satisfactory explanation of and attonement for his conduct in the various attempts it is alledged he has made to injure me is incorrect.

As I allways despised duplicity in others and never have practised it myself I have to request that you, without delay make known to Colo. Williams the mistake you have fell into and explain to him that I never can become friendly with him, untill this explanation does take plaice; that had it not been for the *cry of the military power bearing down the civil* , even where a military man is only defending himself this explanation would have been long since called for, and if Colo. Williams will say to me Senatorial priviledges aside, we will soon put an end to our dispute I will place before him the injuries he has attempted to heap upon me, and the attonement necessary to [be] made, provided he admits the facts, or substantiating them. Should he refuse to do this I may yet a little be compelled to bear with the injury untill I can with honor retire to private life and lay down my commission. Then having all the rights of a citizen, I Can protect my reputation without the *cry of military usurpation* . I have to repeat the request that you without delay, make known to Colo. Williams the mistake you have been under in the communication you have made to him as detailed in your letter of the 25th of Sept. last as I do positively deny having ever gave you such authority.

Blessed is the peace maker, but even in the terms of the Scriptures, where one injureth another he must make reparation before forgiveness and friendship can be restored, and I sincerely regret that your zeal to restore friendship should have led you into so great a mistake as the one commented on.

I am with due respect yr mo. ob. serv.

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P. S. I shall expect to hear from you on the recpt of this, and that you have made the communication requested to Colo. Williams.